Lifecycle of an ABSENTEE ballot

1.
Ballot packets are assembled and mailed to voters three weeks prior to Election Day

2.
Voters seal their ballots in the security envelope, then seal the ballot packet in the signature envelope

3.
The voter signs the signature envelope

4.
Voter mails ballot or returns it to a polling place by Election Day

5.
King County Elections inventories, secures and gathers envelopes daily from the post office and from the polls on Election Day

6.
Ballot packets are sorted, scanned and organized by legislative district for tracking purposes

7.
Elections staff verify the signature on the return envelope against the voter's signature in the registration database

8.
If the signature doesn't match, the voter is contacted and given the opportunity to update their signature

9.
After the signature is verified, the return envelope is opened and separated from the security envelope and ballot.

10.
Once separated, the security envelope is opened and the ballot removed

11.
The ballot is manually inspected to confirm the voter clearly marked their selections and that the ballot can be read by vote counting equipment for tabulation

12.
If the voter made changes to their vote or did not follow instructions, or used pencil, the ballot is duplicated onto a blank ballot by teams of two Elections workers. Each duplicated ballot is assigned a tracking number.

13.
Ballots are stored in locked, electronically controlled, limited-access cages and guarded by two armed Sheriff's deputies around the clock until the election is certified

14 .
Ballots are tabulated on Election Day and archived for up to 22 months in federal elections.